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ABSTRACT

The members of the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors believe that Iowa's community colleges are well positioned to provide the high quality, cost-effective, work force training required to prepare a skilled work force for Iowa for the 21st century. Iowa's community colleges are the logical providers of work force training programs through the work force development centers that are being established through the joint efforts of Iowa's Department of Employment Services and community colleges throughout the state. Advantages to using community colleges are as follows: their focus on career/job preparation and lifelong learning as fundamental missions; extensive, effective links with local business, industry, labor, and government constituents; provision of high-quality training/retraining at a reasonable cost; and continued emphasis on customer-focused, work force training partnerships with local business/industry constituents. The continuing education divisions of Iowa's community colleges are well poised to provide leadership in work force development through adult basic and workplace literacy education, adult vocational, and general interest/avocational noncredit courses. Iowa's community colleges also have the experience and resources required to help develop the comprehensive assessment and collaboration/coordination strategies that must become integral parts of the work force development center's total operational strategy. (Contains 34 references.) (MN)

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The Role of Community College Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers

Prepared by

Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors

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The Role of Community College Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers

Prepared by
Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education
Deans and Directors

January 1996

This report reflects the position of the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors. No official endorsement by any other agency or organization should be inferred.

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Executive Summary:
The Role of Community College Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers

Introduction

Purpose

This white paper has been developed by the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors to address the role of Iowa's community college adult and continuing education divisions within the infrastructure of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers. The concepts presented in this paper represent the position of the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors.

The mission of Iowa's community colleges includes economic and workforce development through lifelong learning programs and customized training. With increasing international competition, Iowa's business and industry have perceived the community colleges as the resource to develop programs that increase the skill level of Iowa's workforce.

Overview

Iowa's community colleges are logical providers of workforce training programs because they:

- **Provide career and job preparation as a primary mission with emphasis on career assessment and planning.**
- **Provide lifelong learning as a fundamental mission.**
- **Work closely with local constituents, including local business, industry, labor, and government, many of whose representatives sit on college career program advisory councils and boards of trustees.**
- **Invest in alternative delivery systems for providing distance learning and instructional technology to support independent learning.**

- **Invest heavily in support services for adult learners of all ages.**
- **Provide strategic locations across the state, thereby enabling the workforce easy access to services.**
- **Provide high quality training and retraining at a reasonable cost.**
- **Continue to build quality, customer-focused, workforce training partnerships with local business and industry constituents. . . with support from college program advisory councils and from boards of trustees.**
- **Provide a variety of customized training programs that are responsive to business and industry's workforce training needs.**

Definition of Workforce Training and the Vision for Workforce Development Centers

For the purposes of this paper, workforce training is defined as those activities designed to improve the competencies and skills of current or new employees of business, industry, labor, and government. Such training is typically provided on a contract basis with the employer who: 1) defines the objectives of the employee training, 2) schedules the duration of the training, 3) specifies the delivery mechanism by which training is provided, and 4) delineates competencies of the trainer. Workforce training is customer-driven, involves payment by the customer to the training provider, and is usually linked to some economic development strategy of the employer.

Role of Adult and Continuing Education in the Workforce Development Centers

Mission of Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa

The title "Workforce Development Center" speaks to education and training. If the workforce is to be developed, the key is the development of the people who make up the workforce, those entering the workforce, or those already in the workforce who are in need of lifelong learning to maintain, upgrade and learn new skills. These skills will contribute to the success of business and industry assisting the United States to enhance its position of leadership in the global economy.

Continuing education divisions of the community colleges have, from the beginning of the community college movement, been the division that defines the term "community" in the name community college. Strong community involvement includes training and retraining of workers. This means forming partnerships with other community agencies, business and industry, and government to meet the training and retraining needs of: 1) on-line workers, 2) skilled workers, 3) persons in licensed occupations and professions, and 4) supervisors and managers.

Since the community college continuing education divisions have considerable experience, not just in Iowa, but across the nation in establishing workforce training and retraining programs, they can be of assistance in the establishment of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers, as well as their continuing operation. This commitment is evidenced by the joint efforts with Iowa Department of Employment Services and the establishment of the centers on community college campuses.

Continuing education divisions provide leadership within the colleges and the community because they:

- Characterize a quick response system that recognizes opportunities and designs innovative programs.
- Document successful strategies for building effective partnerships, accessing the adult learner, and providing innovative delivery systems.
- Serve a clientele that is often comprised of the following populations: 1) disadvantaged, 2) minorities, 3) women, 4) unemployed, 5) underemployed, 6) single parents, 7) elderly, and 8) working adults.
- Bring to bear on community issues all the resources of the entire comprehensive community colleges.

Services Offered by Continuing Education

Iowa has a superior continuing education delivery system, which is currently operated through the fifteen community colleges' continuing education divisions. Nowhere is the commitment of Iowa's community college system to lifelong learning better illustrated than in its continuing education offerings. From literacy development and high school completion classes through vocational training and retraining to professional upgrading to avocational learning, these programs provide educational opportunities that virtually touch every family in the state.

Iowa's community colleges provide workforce training and retraining programs for adults in the following areas:

- Adult basic and workplace literacy education.
- Adult vocational, short-term preparatory, and mandatory continuing education.
- General interest and avocational non-credit courses.

Assessment

Given the potential of Iowa's community colleges to be Workforce Development Centers, a comprehensive assessment component must be an integral part of the total operational strategy. The basic purpose of assessment is to provide an indicator of readiness to engage in any educational and/or workforce training and establish job skills for success in the workforce. A comprehensive assessment strategy for Iowa's Workforce Development Centers must include:

- Assessment of basic employability skills.
- Assessment for job profiling.

There are two assessment systems that can achieve both strategies: CASAS and Work Keys. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is currently being used in Iowa's adult basic education programs for effective assessment of basic employability skills. The Work Keys system has assessment of both individuals' skill levels and analysis of skills required to succeed on the job.

Collaboration and Coordination

Iowa's community college continuing education delivery system has collaborated with various state and local governmental departments and agencies to provide educational and ancillary services to the following types of organizations:

- Business and Industry.
- Public and Private Educational Agencies.
- State and Local Manpower Training Agencies.
- Post-Secondary Institutions.
- Community Organizations.
- State and Local Human Service Agencies.
- Other Organizations and Entities Concerned With Continuing Education Collaboration and Coordination Efforts.

Conclusions

- The present community college continuing education delivery system is clearly accountable to its constituents and continues to have a significant impact in meeting the economic and educational needs of Iowa's citizens.
- Iowa's community college continuing education divisions have effectively served the training and retraining needs of Iowa's business and industry for the past three decades.

- An extensive and effective linkage system of local community entities (businesses, industries, local educational agencies, etc.) has been developed by Iowa's community colleges to expand programming efforts in the local communities.

- Current projections clearly indicate a continued and increasing need for training and retraining programs for Iowa's business and industry. The community colleges are in a position to meet these increased demands for training and retraining.

- Continuing education programs should continue to offer non-credit courses. It is documented by the Iowa Workforce Training Study that training and retraining needs of many adults are better served through non-credit courses.

Recommendations

- Adult basic education and vocational funding, received from federally mandated block grants, should continue to be channeled through the Iowa Department of Education.

- Historically the comprehensive and flexible training and retraining delivery system provided by the community colleges has been demonstrated to have met the needs of local businesses and industries. This system must be maintained and its comprehensiveness and flexibility must be guaranteed. Consistent with this concept, there is a critical need to maintain the funding philosophy that will continue to provide training for businesses and industries that meets their needs and is provided at a time and place that is appropriate.

- Significant state funding for non-credit programs must continue to be channeled into Iowa's community college continuing education programs in order to effectively meet the present and future training and retraining needs of Iowa's business and industry.

- The community colleges should continue to serve the adult citizenry with training and retraining courses.

- Continuing education programs should concentrate on linking with distance education technology to offer learning opportunities to a greater number of Iowa's adult citizenry.

- A comprehensive assessment system, utilizing both the CASAS and Work Keys assessment systems, must be a key component of Iowa's Workforce Development Center System. A well-designed assessment program should encompass the entire range of assessment activities from basic employability skills through job profiling.

- There must be representation on state and local workforce development councils and committees from the community college continuing education divisions. This representation will ensure a closely coordinated effort with all partners and stakeholders involved in the formulation, development, and implementation of the regional workforce development centers.

- Community college leaders must continue to work in partnership with local business leaders to inform them about workforce training programs and services that Iowa's community colleges can provide to increase employee skills, company comprehensiveness and profitability.

- Community college workforce training programs need to continue to work with business and industry management and employees to assess training needs and develop customized instructional delivery systems.

- Community college leaders must remain proactive in working with federal, state, and local government to initiate policies and funding incentives for businesses and industries to invest in workforce training and ensure appropriate funding for Iowa's community colleges that provide quality, customer-focused workforce training as part of the economic development mission.

- State government should develop policies and regulations that provide businesses and industries with incentives to invest in workforce training and continuing education of employees, and to enroll in lifelong learning programs for professional development and skill upgrading.

- State government needs to utilize Iowa's community colleges as a one-stop source for career and job assessment and workplace basic skills because the infrastructure and instructional technology is already in place.

- Business and industry leaders need to develop cooperative training partnerships with Iowa's community colleges to develop and implement effective workforce training delivery systems at a reasonable cost.

- Business and industry leaders need to work with state legislators to develop policies, programs, and incentives that will encourage businesses and industries to invest in workforce training.

- Business and industry needs to provide employees with incentives for continuing education, lifelong learning, and the continual upgrading of workplace skills.

Epilogue

Educating and training a world-class workforce is key to Iowa's economic growth and ability to compete in the global marketplace. Iowa's community colleges are well-positioned to provide quality, cost-effective, workforce training, and prepare a skilled workforce for the 21st Century.

Preface

New technology. Participative management. Sophisticated statistical quality controls. Customer service. Just-in-time production. The workplace is changing and so are the skills that employees need in order to accommodate change.

The upskilling of work in America is driven by technical changes, innovation, and a sense of heightened competition. The picture is further complicated by competitive challenges driving companies toward employing an array of strategies that require adaptive and innovative workers with strong interpersonal skills. Employers are demanding that employees demonstrate workforce based competencies in the areas of: 1) technical skills, 2) computer skills, 3) business skills, 4) professional development, 5) communication and computation skills, 6) interpersonal skills, and 7) critical thinking skills.

Couple this with the movement toward more participative management and employers aggressively driving workers toward decision-making at the point of production or point of sale; it is easy to see that new skills must be applied if employees--and their employers--are to succeed in the marketplace.

In fact, one might observe that a new kind of American worker is evolving. This new worker will be expected to have a broad set of skills that were previously required only of supervisors and management.

In an era of rapid technological change, workers are called upon to upgrade skills and even change careers several times during their working lives. Hence, workers need more training and retraining. Today, this demand for training is often met through the nation's system of community colleges adult and continuing education divisions.

Over the past three decades, Iowa's community colleges have been major providers of the workforce training necessary in strengthening the competitiveness of Iowa's business and industry to succeed and survive in a global economy.

The mission of Iowa's community colleges, and of community colleges across the United States, includes economic and workforce development through lifelong learning programs and customized training. With increasing international competition, business and industry have looked to community colleges to develop programs that increase the skill level of their workforce.

Due to the positive results reported by many employers, Iowa's community colleges are the most logical providers of workforce development training. By building local and regional training partnerships with business and industry, Iowa's community colleges provide a quality, cost effective, infrastructure and workforce development delivery system.

Workforce development focuses on the customized training and retraining needs of business and industry. However, the important role of Iowa's community colleges in workforce development encompasses much more: 1) apprenticeship training, 2) continuing education, 3) professional development programs, 4) Small Business Development Centers, 5) school-to-work transition programs, 6) youth apprenticeship, and 7) workplace basic skills and assessment.

Workforce development and training must be a high priority for America's and Iowa's economic success. Information collected from Iowa's business and industry respondents, regarding workforce training and retraining needs, provides excellent support that Iowa's community colleges can become an even more effective workforce development and training delivery system in the 1990s and beyond.

Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors

January 1996

The Role of Community College Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers

Introduction

Purpose

This white paper has been developed by the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors to address the role of Iowa's community college adult and continuing education divisions within the infrastructure of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers. The concepts presented in this paper represent the position of the Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education Deans and Directors. The term "adult and continuing education" will be referenced in this paper as "continuing education".

Today's workers must be more than industrious. This Iowa work ethic, affirmed for years, must now include working smarter. If the state is to remain competitive in the global economic race, a partnership of private and public concerns is a must. When the Iowa General Assembly created the "Iowa Invests" Program in 1993, one of its strategies was workforce development.

The mission of Iowa's community colleges includes economic and workforce development through lifelong learning programs and customized training. With increasing international competition, Iowa's business and industry have perceived the community colleges as the resource to develop programs that increase the skill level of Iowa's workforce.

The community colleges are committed to meeting the post-secondary educational, economic, cultural, and social mobility needs of their constituents. They are charged with being accessible, comprehensive, community centered, and flexible in such areas as planning, programming, funding, teaching, and administration. They are responsive to the changing needs of business and industry by being willing to extend their educational

capabilities beyond the traditional classroom in a partnership with business and industry to provide needed training and retraining *(IACCT, 1987)*.

The mission and purpose of Iowa's community colleges is outlined in the Code of Iowa, Chapter 260C.1:

> "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state of Iowa and the purpose of this chapter to provide for the establishment of not more than fifteen areas which shall include all of the area of the state and which may operate community colleges offering to the greatest extent possible, educational opportunities and services in each of the following, when applicable, but not necessarily limited to:
>
> 1. The first two years of college work including preprofessional education.
> 2. Vocation and technical training.
> 3. Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers.
> 4. Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age.
> 5. Programs for all students of high school age who may best serve themselves by enrolling for vocational and technical training while also enrolled in a local high school, public or private.
> 6. Programs for students of high school age to provide advanced college placement courses not taught at a student's high school while the student is also enrolled in the high school.
> 7. Student personnel services.
> 8. Community services.
> 9. Vocational education for persons who have academic, socioeconomic, or other handicaps which prevent succeeding in regular vocational education programs.
> 10. Training, retraining, and all necessary preparation for productive employment of all citizens.
> 11. Vocational and technical training for persons who are not enrolled in a high school and who have not completed high school.
> 12. Developmental education for persons who are academically or personally underprepared to succeed in this program of study."

The continuing education divisions have been involved in the delivery of these services since the inception of the community colleges in 1966. However, the primary emphasis has been on:

- Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers.

- Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age.
- Community services.
- Training, retraining, and all necessary preparation for productive employment of all citizens.
- Vocational and technical training for persons who are not enrolled in a high school and who have not completed high school.

Iowa's community colleges provide quality workforce training programs to employers as documented by Iowa's Continuing Education Impact Study and the Iowa Workforce Training Study *(Iowa Department of Education, 1991; NCCSCE, 1996).* This existing network provides a quality, cost effective infrastructure and workforce training delivery system.

Overview

Iowa's community colleges have emerged as the major provider of workforce training programs which are required to maintain and extend the competitiveness of Iowa's business and industry. They provide training, retraining, and upskilling of employees of business, industry, labor, and government as a logical extension of their career preparation, continuing education, and community service missions.

Iowa's community colleges are logical providers of workforce training programs because they:

- **Provide career and job preparation as a primary mission with emphasis on career assessment and planning.**
- **Provide lifelong learning as a fundamental mission.**
- **Work closely with local constituents, including local business, industry, labor, and government, many of whose representatives sit on college career program advisory councils and boards of trustees.**
- **Invest in alternative delivery systems for providing distance learning and instructional technology to support independent learning.**

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- **Invest heavily in support services for adult learners of all ages.** These support services include: student assessment, counseling, educational planning and academic advising, tutoring and remedial education, child care, career development, and job placement services. These support services are packaged to meet the continuing educational needs of adults.

- **Provide strategic locations across the state, thereby enabling the workforce easy access to services.**

- **Provide high quality training and retraining at a reasonable cost.**

- **Continue to build quality, customer-focused, workforce training partnerships with local business and industry constituents. . . with support from college program advisory councils and from boards of trustees.**

- **Provide a variety of customized training programs that are responsive to business and industry's workforce training needs.**

Definition of Workforce Training and the Vision for Workforce Development Centers

For the purposes of this paper, workforce training is defined as those activities designed to improve the competencies and skills of current or new employees of business, industry, labor, and government *(American Association of Community Colleges, 1993)*. Such training is typically provided on a contract basis with the employer who: 1) defines the objectives of the employee training, 2) schedules the duration of the training, 3) specifies the delivery mechanism by which training is provided, and 4) delineates competencies of the trainer. Workforce training is customer-driven, involves payment by the customer to the training provider, and is usually linked to some economic development strategy of the employer *(Jacobs, 1992)*.

The vision for Iowa's Workforce Development Centers was created by the Governor's Workforce Development Council. For the purposes of this paper, this vision is the catalyst:

> "When an Iowa citizen needs assistance he/she will only need to know that the local center is the portal to services...The services required to meet his/her needs will be gathered from those available in the community. The customer will not need to be concerned about the different programs involved in delivering the

services, since the programmatic requirements will be handled by staff in a way that is invisible to the customer" *(Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1995).*

After 30 years of workforce training delivery to public and private entities, Iowa's community colleges are uniquely positioned to provide the training component required by Iowa's Workforce Development Centers. The community college workforce training delivery system is a proven entity as documented by the Iowa Continuing Education Impact Study. In that study, 96 percent of the respondents rated the quality of community college workforce training as "good" or "excellent" *(Iowa Department of Education, 1991).* This superior rating by employers was upheld by the Iowa Workforce Training Study *(NCCSCE, 1996).* In this study, a range of 95.6 to 97.5 percent of the respondents, who indicated they were "somewhat familiar" or "very familiar" with the workforce training programs and services offered by the local community colleges, rated the quality of instruction as "good" or "excellent". This training included assessment, customized training, skill development and upgrading as well as other activities necessary to maintain Iowa's competitive position in a global marketplace.

The Iowa Workforce Training Study reports the following additional findings:

- Forty-five percent of the respondents report that 50 percent or more of their workforce need training. This finding is similar to one in which approximately 20 percent of the nation's adult population participated in work-related courses *(Kwang, et al., 1995).*
- Fifty-five percent of the respondents report that just under 50 percent of their workforce need training.
- Thirty-nine percent of the respondents desire non-credit courses.
- Fifty-five percent of the respondents desire a combination of credit and non-credit courses.
- Seventy-six percent or more of the respondents indicate that "upgrade of employee skills" or "improve employee performance and productivity" were major goals for workforce training.

- Fifty percent or more of the respondents report that training was "needed" or "much needed" in the following areas: 1) technical skills, 2) computer skills, 3) business skills, 4) professional development, 5) communication and computation skills, 6) interpersonal skills, 7) government regulations, and 8) critical thinking skills. These findings are similar to those reported in the Michigan and Maryland Workforce Training Studies *(Wismer and Zappala, 1993; Clagett, et al., 1995)*.

- Eighty-two percent of the respondents report that technological changes in their companies would increase the need for workforce training by "some extent" or "considerable extent".

- Sixty-one percent of the respondents report that "video-based training" was the preferred medium for distance learning training programs *(NCCSCE, 1996)*.

The Workforce Center concept is appropriate and timely. The citizens of Iowa can benefit from the efficiency of a seamless delivery system with full inclusion of Iowa's community colleges in a non-duplicative, collaborative role.

Role of Adult and Continuing Education in the Workforce Development Centers

Mission of Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa

The title "Workforce Development Center" speaks to education and training. If the workforce is to be developed, the key is the development of the people who: 1) make up the workforce, 2) those entering the workforce, or 3) those already in the workforce who are in need of lifelong learning to maintain, upgrade and learn new skills. These skills will contribute to the success of business and industry assisting the United States to enhance its position of leadership in the global economy.

Continuing education divisions of the community colleges have, from the beginning of the community college movement, been the division that defines the term "community" in the name community college. Strong community involvement includes training and retraining of workers. This means forming partnerships with other community agencies, business and industry, and government to meet the training and retraining needs of:

1) on-line workers, 2) skilled workers, 3) persons in licensed occupations and professions, and 4) supervisors and managers.

It is logical that Iowa's community college continuing education divisions and Iowa's Workforce Development Centers form a partnership for the development of this new concept of serving the workforce and potential workers. The direction these centers take is crucial to the efficient use of the forthcoming federal block grant funds.

Since the community college continuing education divisions have considerable experience, not just in Iowa, but across the nation in establishing workforce training and retraining programs, they can be of assistance in the establishment of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers, as well as their continuing operation. This commitment is evidenced by the joint efforts with Iowa Department of Employment Services and the establishment of the centers on community college campuses.

Continuing education has among its major components: 1) workforce training and retraining, 2) workplace literacy, and 3) community resource development. All courses, programs, conferences, and activities provided to implement these components have as their objective imparting knowledge, developing skills, or clarifying values. The approach or delivery mode is one that enables citizens to access quality programs and needed competencies any time, any place, and in a format that blends education with work and family throughout life. Implementation is achieved through innovation and community collaboration in the broadest sense of community.

Continuing education divisions provide leadership within the colleges and the community because they:

- Characterize a quick response system that recognizes opportunities and designs innovative programs.

- Document successful strategies for building effective partnerships, accessing the adult learner, and providing innovative delivery systems.
- Serve a clientele that is often comprised of the following populations: 1) disadvantaged, 2) minorities, 3) women, 4) unemployed, 5) underemployed, 6) single parents, 7) elderly, and 8) working adults.
- Bring to bear on community issues all the resources of the entire comprehensive community colleges *(NCCSCE, 1988)*.

Services Offered by Continuing Education

Iowa has a superior continuing education delivery system, which is currently operated through the fifteen community colleges' continuing education divisions. Nowhere is the commitment of Iowa's community college system to lifelong learning better illustrated than in its continuing education offerings. From literacy development and high school completion classes through vocational training and retraining to professional upgrading to avocational learning, these programs provide educational opportunities that virtually touch every family in the state.

Iowa's community colleges provide workforce training and retraining programs for adults in the following areas:

- Adult basic and workplace literacy education.
- Adult vocational, short-term preparatory, and mandatory continuing education.
- General interest and avocational non-credit courses.

Adult Basic and Workplace Literacy Education

The adult basic and workplace literacy education (ABE) program is a comprehensive system which provides services throughout the state for Iowans 16 years of age and older who wish to acquire or enhance their basic workforce or academic skills. People without a basic workforce or academic skills foundation face very real problems. They are at a disadvantage competing in the job market. They are more likely to be employed in

minimum wage jobs and are unprepared to benefit from job training programs when new skills are required for continued employment. The ABE program offers these adults a chance to develop the reading, writing, mathematics, and English language skills they need to take advantage of educational and employment opportunities that could improve the quality of their lives. The ABE program is the first step in a progression that leads adults to reach their potential.

Iowa's strong commitment to serving the needs of its undereducated adults is exemplified in its well-established ABE program. The strength of Iowa's ABE programming is its delivery system which is flexible in responding to local needs as they emerge, whether from employers, service agencies, or students.

Collaboration and coordination have been the mainstays of the program from the beginning including: 1) mutual referrals, 2) assessment, 3) tracking client goals and progress, and 4) decisions regarding the planned delivery of services to the client. There has always been strong collaboration with federal employment training programs to help adults prepare for the workforce and become self-sufficient. ABE programs, in their local communities, seek out working agreements with: 1) Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 2) Iowa Department of Human Services, 3) Iowa Department of Employment Services, 4) adult and juvenile court officials, and 5) many other service agencies.

With the increased awareness of the need for a workforce to be able to function in a highly technical environment, more emphasis is being placed on education. The ABE program has responded to this focus by supplying their services either in business and industry or in the classroom. The program is ready and able to do: 1) assessment, 2) provide basic academic skills, 3) English as a Second Language training, 4) workplace literacy, 5) job seeking and retention skills, and 6) communication skills. In this continuing

effort to meet the changing needs of Iowa's undereducated adult population and to align the adult basic education curricula with the needs of the community, the Iowa Department of Education initiated a statewide survey to prioritize competencies as determined by various respondents, including business and industry personnel, employment service providers, instruction providers, learners, and others *(CASAS, 1995; CASAS, 1996; Iowa Department of Education, 1995)*. This research provides future direction to Iowa's community college ABE providers and specifically designates those competencies that are deemed important to the current and future workforce.

The success of Iowa's ABE program is documented by the Iowa GED Graduate Follow-up Study *(Beder, 1992)*. The major conclusion from this study was that obtaining an Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma is a sound personal, social, and economic investment.

Priority Target Populations

The following target populations have been identified, through a secondary analysis of the Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IASALS) data, as priority populations for adult basic education and vocational training *(Beder, 1995)*. The six priority populations are: 1) able-bodied welfare recipients (AWR), 2) low-wage earners who were not recipients of public assistance (LWW), 3) at-risk youth (ARY), 4) persons for whom English was their second language and who were not literate in English (ESL), 5) high school dropouts with relatively high education attainment (HiDrp), and 6) least educated public school dropouts (LoDrp). These target populations are defined as follows:

- **Able-bodied welfare recipients (AWR).** Persons who received AFDC or food stamps and who did not have disabilities which prevented them from working. Able-bodied welfare recipients, including women caring for young children, represent about 7.4 percent of the Iowa adult population and about three-quarters of the Iowa adult population receiving welfare.

- **Low-wage earners who were not recipients of public assistance (LWW).** Adults who did not receive AFDC or food stamps and were employed full-time at, or below, the minimum wage. This population constitutes about 8.4 percent of the Iowa adult population.

- **At-risk youth (ARY).** Persons age 16 to 21 who had not completed high school and were not currently enrolled in school. At-risk youth comprises approximately .6 percent of the Iowa population age 16 and over.

- **Persons for whom English was their second language (ESL).** Persons who indicated on the IASALS that they would not speak or write in English. The ESL population constitutes about 1.4 percent of the Iowa adult population.

- **Dropouts with relatively high educational attainment (HiDrp).** Persons who dropped out of high school during eleventh grade. This population makes up about 3.1 percent of the Iowa adult population.

- **Least educated school dropouts (LoDrp).** Persons whose educational attainment was grade ten or less. LoDrp comprises about 1.7 percent of the Iowa adult population.

Collectively, the priority target populations comprise 22.6 percent of Iowa's adult population. These target populations will be prime candidates for services offered in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers. They constitute a significant percentage of Iowa's total adult population to be served.

Adult Vocational, Short-Term Preparatory, and Mandatory Continuing Education

Continuing education curriculum is designed to help Iowa's workers stay current in their profession or prepare for a career or career change. A wide variety of classes are offered in such areas as: 1) business management, 2) office occupations, 3) health care and allied health, 4) automotive repair, 5) computer programming, 6) electronics, 7) child care, 8) building maintenance, 9) apprenticeship, and 10) law enforcement. Many professionals, such as nurses, insurance agents and cosmetologists, use mandatory continuing education courses to meet requirements for licensure. The times and locations of offerings

accommodate students' work schedules. In some instances, classes are taught on-site at local businesses. Although most continuing education offerings are taught as non-credit short courses, some credit and non-credit offerings are longer, particularly those designed to train new workers.

Customized training and retraining for Iowa's business and industry is offered through continuing education divisions. Services currently provided include: 1) assessment, 2) basic skills enhancement, 3) curriculum development, 4) workskills development and upgrading, 5) technical assistance, 6) consultation, and 7) self-enrichment. Continuing education staff provide customized training to target populations at a time and place convenient for them.

The Iowa Continuing Education Impact Study and the Iowa Workforce Training Study indicate a constantly increasing need for workforce training and retraining during the 1990s and beyond. Changes occurring in the workplace result in a greater demand for workers who are adaptable, particularly in view of rapidly advancing technologies. Community colleges provide the flexibility necessary to respond to the diverse needs of local residents, and business and industry. Because of continuing education classes offered through Iowa's community colleges, the quality of thousands of lives is improved every year *(Iowa Department of Education, 1991; NCCSCE, 1996).*

General Interest and Avocational Non-credit Courses

Undoubtedly, the most varied offerings of Iowa's community colleges are the general interest and avocational non-credit courses offered through continuing education. Adults participate in these courses to improve personal development skills and augment self-enrichment with a goal of becoming well-rounded and effective citizens. Frequently offered in cooperation with local public schools, these courses range from driver improvement to

French braiding. General courses include subjects such as: 1) income tax preparation, 2) effective parenting, 3) introduction to computers, and 4) making a will. Avocational courses include subjects such as aerobics and photography.

Assessment

Given the potential of Iowa's community colleges to be Workforce Development Centers, a comprehensive assessment component must be an integral part of the total operational strategy. The basic purpose of assessment is to provide an indicator of readiness to engage in any educational and/or workforce training and establish job skills for success in the workforce. A comprehensive assessment strategy for Iowa's Workforce Development Centers must include:

- Assessment of basic employability skills.
- Assessment for job profiling.

There are two assessment systems that can achieve both strategies: CASAS and Work Keys. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is currently being used in Iowa's adult basic education programs for effective assessment of basic employability skills. The Work Keys system has assessment of both individuals' skill levels and analysis of skills required to succeed on the job. However, the Work Keys system does assume mastery of basic skills competencies. The CASAS system can be used to determine mastery of basic employability skills competencies.

CASAS, working in conjunction with Work Keys, can accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide total comprehensive assessment system for the regional workforce development centers. Each system has developed assessments and job analysis processes that complement each other.
- Design and deliver effective education and training programs as adult learners become skilled to succeed on the job.

The Iowa Adult Literacy Survey (IASALS) indicates that 22 to 26 percent of Iowa's adult population lack basic workforce skills *(Jenkins & Kirsch, 1994)*. Therefore, it is imperative that assessment instruments effectively measure basic skills and analyze job tasks employing a common language. This should be a language employers, educators, labor, policy-makers and learners share.

Iowa's Workforce Development Centers can use the results of CASAS initial assessment to efficiently and cost-effectively determine whether youth or adults have the basic skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

Iowa's community college adult basic education programs can continue to use CASAS workplace analysis and assessment instruments with learners who require basic employability skills instruction. When learners demonstrate mastery of basic employability skills, the Work Keys system can be used for job profiling assessment.

A well-designed comprehensive assessment system, utilized across state agencies, can facilitate coordination and make access to services easier for clients. Utilizing a comprehensive assessment system allows clients: 1) to move easily among education and training programs, 2) to provide a common assessment vocabulary so all agencies can determine initial client proficiency levels as well as ongoing progress, and 3) to minimize duplicative or unnecessary testing of clients. An assessment program encompassing the entire range of assessment activities from basic skills to job analysis information (CASAS and Work Keys), is one of the key components for the successful operation of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers.

Collaboration and Coordination

The vision and mission statements of the Iowa Workforce Development Council state:

Vision - "All Iowans will have the opportunity to achieve a high standard of living."

Mission - "The Iowa Workforce Development Council will foster high performance workers and work places through a workforce development system that is customer-oriented, comprehensive, innovative, and built upon a strong public and private partnership *(Iowa Workforce Development Council, p.5., 1995)*."

Iowa's community colleges, by virtue of what they do and have effectively demonstrated for 30 years, must become an integral part of workforce development initiatives in each workforce development Service Delivery Area as implied in the vision and mission statements.

Iowa's community college continuing education delivery system has collaborated with various state and local governmental departments and agencies to provide educational and ancillary services to the following types of organizations:

- Business and Industry (e.g. Iowa Association of Business and Industry, Trade Associations, Small Business Development Centers of Iowa, Wallace Technology Transfer Foundation Network, Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS), Hospitals and Health Services, Labor Unions).
- Public and Private Educational Agencies (e.g. Area Education Agencies (AEAs), Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Iowa Department of Education).
- State and Local Manpower Training Agencies (e.g. Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED), Iowa Department of Employment Services (IDES), State and Local Workforce Councils, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Promise Jobs).
- Post-Secondary Institutions (e.g. Regents Institutions, Private Colleges and Universities, Community Colleges).
- Community Organizations (e.g. Displaced Homemaker/Single Parent, Dislocated Workers, Churches, Fraternal/Sororal Organizations, Community Action Agencies, Chambers of Commerce).
- State and Local Human Service Agencies (e.g. Area Agencies on Aging, Iowa Department of Corrections, Iowa Department of Human Services).
- Other Organizations and Entities Concerned With Continuing Education Collaboration and Coordination Efforts.

The Iowa statewide community college continuing education delivery system has been clearly established and accepted as an effective vehicle for reaching the adult population in

locations across the state. It is the challenge of continuing education to maintain these high standards of excellence, quality, innovation, accountability and proactiveness to meet the training and retraining needs of Iowa's workforce.

As Workforce Development Centers evolve across the state, Iowa's community colleges must collaborate and coordinate with all organizations involved in the formulation and development of the regional Workforce Development Centers.

Conclusions

The conclusions are based on the concepts presented throughout the preceding sections:

- The present community college continuing education delivery system is clearly accountable to its constituents and continues to have a significant impact in meeting the economic and educational needs of Iowa's citizens.
- Iowa's community college continuing education divisions have effectively served the training and retraining needs of Iowa's business and industry for the past three decades.
- An extensive and effective linkage system of local community entities (businesses, industries, local educational agencies, etc.) has been developed by Iowa's community colleges to expand programming efforts in the local communities.
- Current projections clearly indicate a continued and increasing need for training and retraining programs for Iowa's business and industry. The community colleges are in a position to meet these increased demands for training and retraining.
- Continuing education programs should continue to offer non-credit courses. It is documented by the Iowa Workforce Training Study that training and retraining needs of many adults are better served through non-credit courses.

Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the concepts and conclusions presented in the preceding sections of this paper. The recommendations are:

- Adult basic education and vocational funding, received from federally mandated block grants, should continue to be channeled through the Iowa Department of Education.

- Historically the comprehensive and flexible training and retraining delivery system provided by the community colleges has been demonstrated to have met the needs of local businesses and industries. This system must be maintained and its comprehensiveness and flexibility must be guaranteed. Consistent with this concept, there is a critical need to maintain the funding philosophy that will continue to provide training for businesses and industries that meets their needs and is provided at a time and place that is appropriate.

- Significant state funding for non-credit programs must continue to be channeled into Iowa's community college continuing education programs in order to effectively meet the present and future training and retraining needs of Iowa's business and industry.

- The community colleges should continue to serve the adult citizenry with training and retraining courses.

- Continuing education programs should concentrate on linking with distance education technology to offer learning opportunities to a greater number of Iowa's adult citizenry.

- A comprehensive assessment system, utilizing both the CASAS and Work Keys assessment systems, must be a key component of Iowa's Workforce Development Center System. A well-designed assessment program should encompass the entire range of assessment activities from basic employability skills through job profiling.

- There must be representation on state and local workforce development councils and committees from the community college continuing education divisions. This representation will ensure a closely coordinated effort with all partners and stakeholders involved in the formulation, development, and implementation of the regional workforce development centers.

- Community college leaders must continue to work in partnership with local business leaders to inform them about workforce training programs and services that Iowa's community colleges can provide to increase employee skills, company comprehensiveness and profitability.

- Community college workforce training programs need to continue to work with business and industry management and employees to assess training needs and develop customized instructional delivery systems.

- Community college leaders must remain proactive in working with federal, state, and local government to initiate policies and funding incentives for businesses and industries to invest in workforce training and ensure appropriate funding for Iowa's community colleges that provide quality, customer-focused workforce training as part of the economic development mission.

- State government should develop policies and regulations that provide businesses and industries with incentives to invest in workforce training and continuing education of employees, and to enroll in lifelong learning programs for professional development and skill upgrading.

- State government needs to utilize Iowa's community colleges as a one-stop source for career and job assessment and workplace basic skills because the infrastructure and instructional technology is already in place.

- Business and industry leaders need to develop cooperative training partnerships with Iowa's community colleges to develop and implement effective workforce training delivery systems at a reasonable cost.

- Business and industry leaders need to work with state legislators to develop policies, programs, and incentives that will encourage businesses and industries to invest in workforce training.

- Business and industry needs to provide employees with incentives for continuing education, lifelong learning, and the continual upgrading of workplace skills.

Epilogue

Educating and training a world-class workforce is key to Iowa's economic growth and ability to compete in the global marketplace. Iowa's community colleges are well-positioned to provide quality, cost-effective, workforce training, and prepare a skilled workforce for the 21st Century.

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